

Our brave men and women in uniform are owed the thanks of a grateful nation.

Sadly, we have seen a growing incidence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among service members who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. To that end, we must make sure that the Department of Defense and Veterans' Affairs are properly equipped to care for these types of injuries.

Congress has already taken steps to:

- Add military behavioral health personnel.
- Require in-person mental health assessments with trained medical professionals before and after deployment.
- Increase access to mental health services for National Guard and Reserve members and their families.
- Further PTSD research and treatments.

Yet, despite these efforts, many service members suffering from PTSD do not seek needed care and continue to express fears that seeking care may adversely impact career advancement. I have been working to encourage the military to look at many ways to reduce this stigma, including encouraging the use of confidential mental health services.

PTSD not only impacts service members but also their families. I have written legislation urging the Veterans Affairs and Defense Departments to ensure that family members have access to PTSD- related services and programs and to the extent possible, use holistic approaches that includes family members in the care targeted to the service member or veteran.

I will continue to work to get ahead of this demand curve and make sure that our nation provides our troops with the services they deserve and have earned.